



Senator Norm Coleman Annual Report

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To My Fellow Minnesotans:

As this session of Congress moves toward adjournment, I'm pleased to have a great deal of good news to report. Since taking office a little over a year and a half ago, I've been working hard to get things done for Minnesota and the nation.

One of my top priorities is taking care of my constituents with their everyday needs. I'm very proud of the work we've done, whether it was helping a senior find a lost Social Security check, assisting a veteran to gain access to a well-deserved benefit, or expediting a foreign adoption. One of my favorite stories is of Brooke Ferdon, whose adoption I helped expedite from Haiti. Brooke's father was serving in the National Guard in Kosovo and contacted my office for help. We went right to work and helped unite Brooke with her new family in March. It's an honor to be able to serve the people of Minnesota in this personal and important way.

I hope you find this newsletter both helpful and informative. If you're looking for additional information, I encourage you to visit my website at www.coleman.senate.gov or contact any one of my offices. I'm proud of what we've been able to do this session, but know there is much more work to be done. As your senator, I am committed to working for you each and every day.

Norm Coleman

*Senator Coleman greets
Brooke and her mother
Debbie Ferdon in Brainerd.*



Improving Minnesota's Economy and Creating Jobs

Thanks to the President's tax relief that I strongly supported, our economy has begun to overcome many of the challenges it faced in the wake of the terrible attacks of September 11, the war on terror, corporate scandals, and the bursting of the tech bubble. Today, our economy is moving from recession to recovery.

The economy continues to move ahead. Almost 1.5 million jobs have been created in the last 11 months, home buying and home ownership are at record highs, and both consumer and producer confidence remain solid. In the past 12 months alone, Minnesotans have seen their real disposable income increase by 3.3 percent. That means more money that Minnesotans can use to invest in their priorities.

More take home pay for Minnesotans also means more jobs in Minnesota. This critical tax relief has helped Minnesota businesses add almost 23,000 new jobs over the past four months and lowered Minnesota's unemployment rate over the past year from 5.1 percent to 4.4 percent. And thanks to the President's tax relief, the future looks even brighter for Minnesota with 30 percent of Minnesota employers expecting to hire more employees— the strongest in 25 years.

Unfortunately, three key components of the President's tax relief will expire at the end of this year unless extended by Congress: the Child Tax Credit, the Ten-Percent Income Tax Bracket, and the Marriage Tax Penalty Relief.

If Congress allows these three provisions of the President's tax relief to expire, a working family of four with a taxable income of \$58,100 will end up paying \$1,611 more in taxes in 2005. That's a 26 percent tax increase! Now is not the time to pull the rug out from under the economy and working Americans. Raising taxes is the wrong way to go. Families across the country, including in Minnesota, have benefited from the tax relief they have received. Please know that I will continue to work to enact a pro-jobs, pro-growth agenda, which includes maintaining the President's tax relief and keeping faith with working moms and dads.

"America has a choice. It can continue to grow the economy and create new jobs, or it can stall our economic recovery by raising taxes on American families and small businesses."

- Norm Coleman

Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

I serve as the chairman of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (PSI), which has broad jurisdiction to look at problems affecting taxpayers and consumers. During my tenure as chairman, PSI has concentrated on three main areas: government waste, public safety, and business accountability.

PSI is now beginning a major investigation into how Saddam Hussein was able to subvert the UN's Oil for Food program in Iraq. This follows reports of massive corruption in the program that may have resulted in the proceeds of oil sales going to terrorists instead of the Iraqi people.

Most recently, PSI held two hearings on the threat that Internet sales of prescription drugs pose to unsuspecting consumers. As a result, legislation that I introduced to help enhance safety measures has been incorporated into the Senate's main drug importation bill.

Throughout my chairmanship, I have stressed the importance of results. My subcommittee cannot just be about issuing reports and holding hearings, but must be about making positive change that

makes government work better. Some of the other investigations I have ordered included two hearings on bogus tax shelters that led to heightened enforcement by the IRS and the payment of

substantial fines by major accounting firms. A hearing on the credit counseling industry encouraged the IRS to review the nonprofit status of several agencies. I have also looked at the recording industry's use of subpoenas against individuals that were illegally sharing files over peer-to-peer networks to ensure that the law was being appropriately applied.

Although I have been chairman for less than two years, I have already held hearings on issues as diverse as SARS, wasteful travel policies in the Department of Defense, patient safety in hospitals, government contractors who do not pay taxes, and the security of Minnesota's borders.

My role as chairman of PSI affords me a unique and important role to play in investigating wrongdoings in both the government and the private sector. I have tried not just to highlight existing problems or assign blame, but have worked hard to find solutions that address the problems we uncover.



Former NYC Mayor Giuliani testifies at a hearing of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations chaired by Senator Coleman on the dangers of ordering pharmaceuticals over the Internet.

Improving Education

I am proud to represent a state that leads the nation in student achievement - our students consistently score above the national average on standardized tests. I am also pleased that we in Congress have provided record levels of funding for education. Since 1996, congressional funding for education has increased by 137 percent and educational funding for Minnesota has actually increased by 32 percent since the President took office. But there's more that needs to be done.

I recognize that Minnesota schools struggle with funding shortfalls and with implementing the federal government's standards. That's why I am working in the U.S. Senate to ensure that Minnesota teachers, principals, parents, and students have the funds necessary to ensure that every child in Minnesota is provided a superior education.

I am proud to co-sponsor bipartisan legislation to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), legislation originally enacted in 1975 to address the fact that children with disabilities often failed to receive a proper education. Unfortunately, the federal government is not paying its fair share. My bill requires increases in federal special education funding and would allow IDEA to reach full funding in eight years.

This year, 12 states, including Minnesota, stand to receive cuts in their Title I funds, federal assistance targeted at particularly poorer school districts, as a result of the Department of Education altering its state per capita income estimates. Minnesota alone stands to lose over \$12 million. This is not acceptable, and I have introduced bipartisan legislation to hold Minnesota's Title I funding steady this year and stop these cuts.

Finally, like many Minnesotans, I am concerned that college tuition is at an all time high. I believe that a college education must be accessible for all students and am working to increase funding for higher education. The Pell Grant program is the foundation for federal student aid and the nation's largest source of grant aid for postsecondary education. I am pleased that my amendment to raise the maximum Pell Grant award from \$4,050 to \$4,500 was agreed to by the Senate as part of this year's budget.



Senator Coleman meets with Minnesota students in Washington.

Keeping Our Promise to America's Veterans

Veterans' issues are of great personal importance to me, and I have worked hard to ensure that those who have served this great country receive the benefits they deserve.

The President and Congress are united in our commitment to provide veterans with access to quality healthcare and other earned benefits. Over the past 10 years, funding for veterans' medical care has doubled.

In 2003, I also helped pass legislation ensuring that retired members of the military with a service connected disability would receive both retirement pay and disability benefits. And I have also introduced important legislation to provide relief for veterans and families who acquired AIDS as a result of blood transfusions while serving their country.

I am honored to represent Minnesota's veterans in the U. S. Senate and will continue to work to ensure that all veterans receive the recognition they deserve and the services they have earned.



Fighting the War on Terror and Keeping the Homeland Secure

We live in extraordinary times. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, were a painful illustration of America's vulnerability to international terrorism. We were forced to confront the fact that America's enemies are willing to go to great lengths to destroy us, and in an increasingly globalized world, they have the means to inflict mass casualties. I supported the President's decision to take the war on terror to the terrorists. I believe that our actions in Iraq and in Afghanistan are making the world safer. It is better to battle the terrorists on the streets of Baghdad or Kabul than on the streets of New York or Minneapolis. Al Qaeda is on the run, thanks to the brave work of our men and women in uniform. We are forever in their debt.

I believe we have a duty to stand behind our troops on the battlefield. I am proud of my vote for \$87 billion to make sure American troops fighting in Iraq have what they need to stay safe. I will continue to support our troops in whatever they need, from healthcare, to protective gear, to the finest training and equipment available on earth.

I was pleased that the Pentagon announced in September 2003 a policy to bring American troops serving in Iraq or Afghanistan for a year or more home for two weeks of rest and recuperation. I was proud to lead a bipartisan effort to make sure military families did not have to bear the cost of bringing their loved ones all the way home. My legislation, which became law on November 6, 2003, required the Pentagon to do the right thing and reimburse families for these costs. It is the least we can do for our men and women serving on the front lines against terror.

Listening and Learning Throughout Minnesota

Listening to Minnesotans is a top priority. That is why I have hosted 12 listening sessions throughout the state during the past year where I've had the opportunity to hear first hand what issues matter most to Minnesotans.

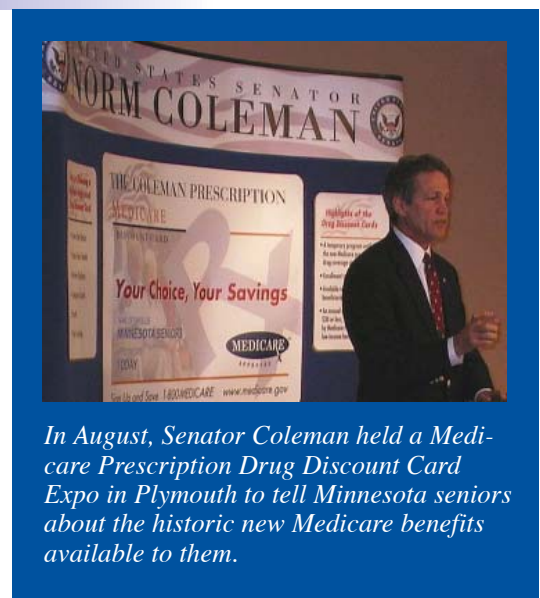
I have held "summits" with Minnesotans in every corner of the state on the issues of the economy and jobs, education, child nutrition, healthcare, farm policy, and national security. In April, I held three listening sessions throughout the state to address the rising costs of higher education and how to keep it accessible to our young people.

I also hosted two sessions on methamphetamine and other narcotics in Fergus Falls and St. Paul in order to find out what is needed to successfully combat this growing epidemic that threatens the safety, security, and health of our communities, especially our young people.

In June, I held a listening session in Burnsville on "Making Minnesota Competitive" to explore how to maintain and grow good paying jobs in our state and, at the end of the month, visited the VA hospital in Minneapolis to address the concerns of health care for our troops, past and present, who have served our country bravely.

In June, I held a discussion on "Child Health and Nutrition" in Chanhassen to address the critical situation of overweight youth in our communities and hosted a Farm Summit in Owatonna to explore ways to protect our nation's food supply, the safest, most abundant, most affordable in the world.

It has been a productive time for me and for Minnesota, and I look forward to continuing these listening sessions across the state in the months and years to come.



In August, Senator Coleman held a Medicare Prescription Drug Discount Card Expo in Plymouth to tell Minnesota seniors about the historic new Medicare benefits available to them.

Leading the Battle Against Global HIV/AIDS

There is little doubt that AIDS is the major pandemic of our lifetime. Having traveled to Africa just last summer, I have seen the devastation of this disease firsthand, a disease which today affects some 40 million people worldwide.

America's commitment to this issue is unparalleled – \$15 billion over five years. Our assistance for global AIDS exceeds any previous single-disease effort, and this year the U.S. will spend more than twice the amount the rest of the world will contribute on global AIDS.

It is estimated that a child is orphaned by AIDS at the rate of one every 14 seconds.

In total, I have worked on amendments to add \$530 million to fighting this deadly and devastating pandemic. In fact, the very first amendment I coauthored as a United States Senator was an effort to increase funding for global AIDS.

In addition, I have also coauthored legislation to improve our strategies for helping AIDS orphans.

I am proud to join Minnesota's faith-based community, universities, organizations, and dedicated and compassionate citizens in fighting global AIDS.

Senator Coleman and His Office Can Help You

We can be your advocate when you are dealing with federal agencies. Are you having trouble with the Internal Revenue Service, do you need a passport, or are you trying to obtain Veterans or Social Security benefits? These are just a few services we offer - so please don't hesitate to call us for assistance.

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